

# **BURKE CENTRE VRE PARKING FACILITY EXPANSION TASK FORCE**

**Agenda for October 15, 2003**

## **Welcome and Introduction**

*Supervisor Sharon Bulova*

## **Adoption of Mission Statement**

*Supervisor Sharon Bulova*

## **Recap/Update from Last Meeting**

*Dan Southworth, Fairfax County Department of Transportation*

*Jim Cole, Project Engineer, Fairfax County Department of Public Works & Environmental  
Services*

*Jennifer Straub, Virginia Railway Express*

- Funding
- EZ Bus (Subscription Bus Service)
  - New Parking Spaces/Restriping
    - Ridership Projections
- Environmental Concerns/Army Corps of Engineers

## **Garage Design**

*Supervisor Sharon Bulova*

- Examples of Aesthetically Designed Parking Garages
- Discussion of Desired Features in a Parking Garage

## **Next Steps – Formation of Committees?**

- Design Features Committee
- Operation of Facility Committee  
(Both During Construction and After)
- Non-motorized access to VRE Station Committee  
(Trails, sidewalks, etc.)

# **BURKE CENTRE VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS PARKING FACILITY EXPANSION TASK FORCE**

## **MEETING TWO SUMMARY**

The second meeting of the Burke Center Virginia Railway Express Parking Facility Expansion Task Force was held in Braddock Hall at the Braddock District Supervisor's office on October 15, 2003, beginning at 7:15 PM. Supervisor Bulova began the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance and by providing a short overview of the goals of the task force. She said that parking solutions will take time, and some short term solutions like the "EZ Bus" subscription bus service and the surface lot restriping are already in the works. The task force is designed to give the community a chance to work together on matters like aesthetics, operations, safety, and multi-modal access to the new parking facility.

Supervisor Bulova clarified the point that anyone who attended the first or second meeting was considered a member of the group and eligible to vote. Those in attendance who did not want to make a long term commitment or those just observing are considered non-voting members. She then stated that her office would keep track of meeting attendance and would post meeting summaries on the Braddock District website. Supervisor Bulova then asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.

Supervisor Bulova then directed everyone to look at the mission statement handout. She read the statement as revised at the first meeting and explained in greater detail her intentions for each paragraph. Steve Schrobo moved to accept the mission statement and was seconded by both Gail Hamilton and Ray Foreman. Everett Johnson then moved to amend the statement by adding "location and design" to the second paragraph. His motion was seconded by Don Charapich.

One gentleman asked why the garage would still be built if the EZ Bus program proved a success. Supervisor Bulova responded that a subscription bus service and more surface parking alone will not solve the long term parking problems at the Burke Centre station. A parking garage will be needed as a long term solution to our parking needs at the station. She then said that the purpose of the task force was to make recommendations as a community about operations, appearance, compatibility with the surroundings and environmental issues.

Another participant asked if Fairfax County had any plans to expand the Rolling Road station parking lot. Supervisor Bulova explained that there are indeed plans to expand parking at the Rolling Road station, but the site is constrained with little room to grow. She suggested that the Morisette property behind the Interstate Van Lines building on Rolling Road would make an excellent location for a parking facility at some point in the future. However, because the Rolling Road station is in the Springfield District, she is more concerned with expansion at Burke Center for the moment.

Art Steffen asked two questions of Supervisor Bulova. First, has Fairfax County approved the construction of the parking garage? Supervisor Bulova responded that, yes it has been approved in the county's Capital Improvement Program and the Board of Supervisors has, on several occasions, approved requests for funding for the garage. Steffen then asked if acceptance of the

mission statement signaled an acceptance of the current surface lot as the site of the garage. Supervisor Bulova said no, and the task force had already sent a letter requesting information on the feasibility of other potential sites.

Supervisor Bulova reread the mission statement as amended and called for a vote on the motion to add “location and design” to the second paragraph. The motion carried unanimously. Then, Roger Kaul moved to add “including safety” to the “operational issues” mentioned in the third paragraph, and he was seconded by Gail Hamilton. After a brief discussion, Supervisor Bulova asked the group to vote on the amendment. One person voted “nay” and the rest “aye,” and the motion was passed. Then, Supervisor Bulova called for a vote on the complete mission statement as amended. Two people voted “nay” and the rest “aye,” and the mission statement was approved.

Supervisor Bulova invited Dan Southworth of the Department of Transportation to begin a brief recapitulation and update from the task force’s first meeting. He referred everyone to the summary of the first meeting available at Supervisor Bulova’s office for more information. He briefly explained the timeline again, stating that the design bid process would last 6 months, followed by 18 months to finish the design, 6 months for construction bids, and another 18 months for construction. The estimated completion date is October 2007.

Southworth also reviewed funding sources for the project. Currently, the county has \$5.125 million available, and that total includes \$2 million from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. The county has requested an additional \$9 million for fiscal year 2005.

Short term solutions to alleviate overcrowding at the Burke Centre station include a restriping of the lot to create additional spaces and a subscription bus service. Restriping has created new spaces in the past (e.g. 1996) and by spring 2004, 20 new spaces should be available. In fall 2004, an additional 62 spaces are to be added to the lot. EZ Bus, the subscription bus service, should be up and running by December 1, 2003. It will feature a route running north of the tracks and a route running south of the tracks. Currently, Southworth explained, county staff is refining the final operational and marketing details of the program. More information will be available at the November meeting.

Supervisor Bulova explained that Larry Ichter of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services was not going to explain the feasibility study presented by Jim Cole at the September meeting. Instead, Ichter would answer questions related to the study and the study itself would be available at Supervisor Bulova’s office should people be interested in reading it. Supervisor Bulova reminded everyone that Ichter had written to the Army Corps of Engineers and to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding the use of the site designated for wetlands mitigation on the north side of the tracks.

Next to speak was Jennifer Straub of Virginia Railway Express regarding the future ridership projection data that task force members had, at the September meeting, asked her to bring. She said that historically VRE has been growing by about 18% a year, and the Manassas Line is growing by about 13% a year. By 2025, VRE could have as many as 40,000 daily riders. Burke

Centre currently has 543 spaces and will need an additional 900-1500 by 2025 to accommodate that level of ridership. One person asked whether VRE planned to run trains all day long in both directions in the future. Straub explained that more frequent service was part of the long term plan. Someone else asked if anyone knew where riders come from. Straub explained that approximately 20% of VRE's riders are from nonmember jurisdictions. Supervisor Bulova added that employers subsidize VRE ticket costs to make it a more attractive commuting option and to get drivers off the streets. Another woman asked why no one rides the Metrobuses to and from the station, and it was explained that the timing of the Metrobuses does not correspond to the train departure times. Someone else asked whether VRE had taken into consideration any problems in their relationship with CSX who owns and regulates the tracks VRE uses on the Fredericksburg line. The Manassas line runs on tracks owned primarily by Norfolk Southern. Straub said CSX and Norfolk Southern currently limit the number of trains that VRE can run, but VRE has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CSX to allow VRE to run more trains. The other limiting factor is the amount of midday parking for the trains in DC, and VRE is actively seeking more parking spaces for its trains. With respect to funding, Straub said federal funds increase as VRE's ridership increases and as the system gets older, and the state is also very interested in seeing VRE succeed. VRE also gets an annual local subsidy, so people should not be concerned about VRE losing funding and ceasing operations.

Supervisor Bulova then asked Larry Ichter to talk about the letters the county sent to VDOT and the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the site north of the tracks designated for wetlands mitigation. He explained that the site was mitigating wetlands disturbed by both the Roberts Road overpass construction and the Springfield interchange. The Army Corps of Engineers has not yet responded with a formal written response but stated informally that it would be dedicated as wetlands in perpetuity. VDOT, on the other hand, responded that the site is already deeded to be wetlands in perpetuity and that it is not feasible to build a parking garage on that land. Supervisor Bulova reminded everyone that, at the May 2003 meeting, the priorities set forward by those in attendance were to preserve the Burke Centre baseball fields and protect the environmentally sensitive areas. Design concept "C" honed in on those priorities, and county staff decided that it was the best option.

Discussion ensued about the site, the garage, and parking. One person said that it was unlikely that the Army Corps of Engineers would allow a change for the site north of the tracks. Another person stated that the costs associated with undoing the steps that had already been taken on the wetlands mitigation site to build a garage would be prohibitive. Someone else raised concerns that the neighbors had not been consulted about building a garage and that a parking garage is not a panacea for the area's transportation problems. Supervisor Bulova pointed out that she had reached out to the community in May 2003. She said that other jurisdictions and localities do not hold task forces, but she feels that community involvement is important. She does want the community involved and that is why she organized the task force in the first place.

Someone then asked how Fairfax County planned to handle the additional traffic resulting from the new parking spaces. Dan Southworth said that county staff was still working out the details, and Supervisor Bulova added that this topic would be discussed by the task force at some point. Someone else then asked why parking at VRE stations is free when parking at Metro stations is not. Jennifer Straub said that Metro, unlike VRE, owns its parking lots and thus can charge

regardless of a jurisdiction's preference. Supervisor Bulova said that the idea of VRE is to get people out of their cars. If people were charged to park in the lot, people would be discouraged from riding the train. A gentleman then asked for clarification about who owned the land on which the garage would be built. Supervisor Bulova reiterated that Fairfax County owns the parking lot and will own the parking structure.

Mike McMahon then introduced his guest, Mike Newman of Virginia Concrete. He presented examples of other parking structures and explained methods of making concrete resemble brick, fieldstone, or cobblestone. The pictures he brought to the meeting are available in the mini-library at Supervisor Bulova's office. Ray Foreman and Steve Schrobo then presented pictures of other parking structures from the area.

A gentleman asked why Burke Centre had not been informed about the garage's construction earlier and why a subscription bus service could not serve as an alternative to the garage. Supervisor Bulova said that a subscription bus service is not a panacea but a pilot program. Mike Lake of the Department of Transportation added that Fairfax Connector service to the station failed because of low ridership and the difficult logistics of timing the buses' arrival to coincide with the trains' departure. Hopefully, the subscription bus service will be more successful.

Supervisor Bulova announced her intention to form three subcommittees, based on the mission statement, dedicated to in-depth study of operational issues, design issues, and pedestrian access. If people were interested in serving on one of these groups, she asked them to write their intentions on the sign-in sheet. One person wanted to add a committee on safety, but Supervisor Bulova decided to remain with the three key groups. However, she did say that safety could be a "subgroup" of the larger groups since safety concerns transcend all three areas.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2003, at 7:15 PM.

Attendees:

Braddock District Office:  
Supervisor Sharon Bulova  
Suzanne Harsel, Planning Commissioner  
Florence Naeve  
Robert Glass

Larry Ichter, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services  
Carey Needham, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services  
Ken Lim, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

Dan Southworth, Department of Transportation  
Mike Lake, Department of Transportation  
Karyn Moreland, Department of Transportation  
Jennifer Straub, Virginia Railway Express

Ms. Caryna Baker-Fox  
Ms. Pamela Bellafiore  
Ms. Kate Bond  
Mr. Michael Brennan  
Mr. Steve Brown  
Mr. Don Charapich  
Ms. Donna Charapich  
Ms. Mary Cortina  
Mr. Sam DiBartolo  
Ms. Shirley DiBartolo  
Mr. Marc Flaster  
Mr. Ray Foreman  
Mr. Peter Gadzinski  
Ms. Lois Gilligan  
Ms. Gail Hamilton  
Ms. Debra Holland  
Ms. Lynn Horton  
Ms. Anne Johnson  
Mr. Everett Johnson  
Ms. Katherine Johnston  
Mr. Roger Kaul  
Ms. Maria Lang

Mr. Laval Mallard  
Ms. Carol Martin  
Ms. Kate Mattice  
Mr. Mike McMahon  
Mr. Kevin Morse  
Mr. Mike Newman  
Mr. Jeff Nolan  
Mr. John Provost  
Mr. Christopher Rodee  
Mr. Leon Rose  
Mr. Glenn Russell  
Mr. Steve Schrobo  
Ms. Charlotte Shakofsky  
Mr. Dan Shoemaker  
Ms. Jennifer Shoemaker  
Ms. Joann Sokol  
Mr. Art Steffen  
Ms. Claudia Tamayo  
Chirathat Theerathada  
Mr. Steve Trapani  
Mr. Bret Wolford  
Ms. Sharon Wolford

## **Appendix**

### VRE Ridership Trends and Projections

#### Historical - Average Daily Ridership, Manassas Line ONLY

*	1995 - 3,114
*	1996 - 3,225
*	1997 - 2,990
*	1998 - 3,197
*	1999 - 3,582
*	2000 - 4,399
*	2001 - 4,948
*	2002- 5,665
*	2003 (half year) - 6,399

#### Ridership Projections

*	2010 - estimated at between 18,000 - 20,000 trips/day systemwide
*	2025 - estimated at between 22,000 - 40,000 trips/day systemwide

Parking - estimated at 900 to 1,500 additional spaces needed by 2025 for Burke Centre.

\*\*\*Next meeting will be November 19 @ 7:15 PM\*\*\*